



NEW HAMPSHIRE DIVISION OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES

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MEMORANDUM

To: New Hampshire Archaeological Consultants

From: Mark Doperalski, State Archaeologist

Re: Collection of Artifacts Associated with Archaeological Field Investigations

Date: March 22, 2019

Cc: Elizabeth Muzzey, New Hampshire State Historic Preservation Officer
Tanya Krajcik, Deputy State Archaeologist, Records & GIS Coordinator
David Trubey, Archaeologist and Review & Compliance Coordinator

Attachment: New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources (NHDHR) Letter of Transfer of Ownership of Archaeological Materials

The collection of artifacts for analysis is an integral and necessary aspect of archaeological field investigations. However, not all landowners are aware that consenting to an archaeological investigation on their properties entails the collection and removal of the identified artifacts to a laboratory for processing and analysis. This has been cause for some landowners in New Hampshire to have concerns as to whom the artifacts belong. In an attempt to avoid such concerns going forward, and to be more transparent about what an archaeological investigation entails, the following statement should be conveyed to all applicable landowners prior to commencement of field work.

“During the course of this archaeological investigation, should artifacts be identified, they will be collected and transported to an archaeological laboratory for processing and analysis. However, the artifacts will remain the property of the landowner. At the conclusion of the investigation, which typically includes field work, artifact analysis, reporting, and agency review and approval, the artifacts will be appropriately packaged and returned to the landowner, the legal owner of the artifacts, unless the landowner chooses to donate the artifacts to the State of New Hampshire. If the landowner chooses to donate the artifacts, the consulting archaeologist will submit the artifacts to the State’s curation facility along with documentation of the transfer of ownership.”

Due to the unique research value and delicate nature of archaeological resources, the NHDHR highly encourages consultants to explain to landowners that artifacts donated to the State of New Hampshire are carefully preserved and available to future researchers and educators. Consultants should also inform landowners that although artifacts may hold high research value, they generally do not possess high monetary value.

